



The Bayou Telephone Company

Date: 3/6/2014

From: The Bayou Telephone Company

To: Federal Communications Commission Staff

Re: Expression of Interest – Rural Broadband Trials, Connect America Fund, WC Docket No. 10-90

Dear Staff,

We learned about this program yesterday and we are excited about the potential it represents to continue serving our small customer base located in the swamp along 4 Mile Bayou Road and beyond to the residents who live within our Service Area, but in areas only accessible by boat and a fixed wireless solution. We also wish to expand our territory to reach out to other underserved or unserved residents that are contiguous to the Bayou Special Service Area.

Background

The Bayou Telephone Company is a privately owned business located in Morgan City, Louisiana and serves an area that is located about 10.5 miles north on a ridge in the swamps of Lower St. Martin Parish. The Bayou Telephone Company was started in 1988 by a gentleman by the name of Fred Marshall who lived in the unserved area and operated almost like a Hotel PBX through a connection to AT&T. He buried copper wire about three inches down along a gravel road and connected to the homes. At one point in time he had approximately 100 customers. Over time the service deteriorated so badly the customer base dropped to about 40 families. Cell phones work only about two months out of the year due to the heavy tree cover and in most areas not at all. We acquired the company from Mr. Marshall at the encouragement of the Louisiana Public Service Commission in September of 2010. Mr. Marshall was up in age and unable to continue the maintenance necessary to continue operations and AT&T refused to extend their services to the area. We upgraded the telephone switch, which has SIP capability, and stood two towers to reach as many customers wirelessly as we could. We also use both of the towers to backhaul VoIP calls back to our main Point of Presence (POP) in Morgan City, Louisiana where we use VoIP to connect the calls.

The Louisiana Public Service Commission has designated a Bayou Special Service Area which AT&T relinquished to The Bayou Telephone Company. We would choose to serve an expanded territory that is historically and culturally known as Stephenville, which Bayou Special Service Area is a part. The entire area is either underserved or unserved.

Geographic Territory

Currently, The Bayou Telephone Company serves an area of approximately 21 square miles, located approximately 10.5 miles north of Morgan City, Louisiana. There is one road into the area that is 6 miles long where most of the current customers reside. The potential customer base is 100 along this ridge/road. The other 300 or so residents of this area live on ridges in the swamp that is accessible by boat only. These residents have neither telephone nor internet accessibility. Due to our short preparation time I was unable to provide census data. In addition, we propose to extend our coverage territory to include contiguous residents along Highway 70 from the northwest corner of Lake Palourde north to Graveyard Island.

List of Anchor Institutions

There is an Elementary School and Sheriff's substation in the expanded territory and we will endeavor to provide high speed internet and VoIP telephone services to these two entities.

Proposed Technology

Currently, we connect the customers on 4 Mile Bayou Road to the tower with the preexisting buried copper wire delivering the connections to our D-slam at the Bayou Telephone towers for the backhaul to Morgan City. However, the copper line is buried about 3 inches along the gravel road and is routinely cut when the Parish government grades the road. It is a continuing maintenance nightmare repairing copper wire that has been in the ground since 1988. We propose to bring fiber down the road buried at an appropriate depth to eliminate that problem. We would then be able to deliver voice, data and video to the residents (approximately 100 residences). We will backhaul to our main distribution tower in Morgan City and connect to our VoIP enabled switch. We propose to stand 5 additional 150 foot free standing towers on the ridges out in the swamp to reach the other 300 potential customers who are unserved in the Service Area and 3 additional towers on the land in the expanded territory. The expanded territory has approximately 1100 underserved or unserved customers. These outlying customers will be served by a fixed wireless, point to multipoint network.

Contemplated Service Offerings

Voice: \$30.00 per month (unlimited local and long distance 50 states and Canada)

Data: 3Mb X 3Mb - \$44.95 per month

4Mb X 4Mb - \$64.95 per month

5Mb X 5Mb - \$84.95 per month

Higher Speeds – to be determined

Video: to be determined

State and/or Local or Tribal Government Participation in and/or Support for Project

There are no Tribal Governments in our Service Area or expanded territory. We are seeking letters of support from our Parish Government and the Louisiana Public Service Commission. The short timeline for our preparation may preclude their inclusion in this letter.

Project Timeline

The main portion of the new facilities should be completed within one year of the commencement of the project.

Approximate Network Build Cost

Fiber to 100 Homes on 4 Mile Bayou Road

7 miles of 72 count fiber	\$ 20,903.32
4 miles of conduit	\$ 21,120.00
10 Pon Splitters	\$ 7,500.00
10 Splice Cases	\$ 4,500.00
Labor to bury conduit/Fiber	\$245,000.00
Admin/network development	<u>\$ 19,531.25</u>
TOTAL	\$318,554.57

Additional Towers to Serve 300 Customers who can be reached only by boat and 1100 customers in the expanded territory

(8) 150 foot Self Supporting Tower	\$12,900.00 each	\$103,200.00
(8) Foundations	\$10,000.00 each	\$ 80,000.00
(8) Labor	\$15,000.00 each	\$120,000.00
(8) Communication Enclosure	\$ 4,000.00 each	\$ 32,000.00
(8) Network and Power Equipment	\$ 5,000.00 each	<u>\$ 40,000.00</u>
TOTAL		\$375,200.00

One Time Capital Infrastructure Investment Needed: \$693,754.57

We also request continuing funding of \$250,000 per year for four years as customers are added to the service.

TOTAL PROJECT COST: \$1,693,754.57

Conclusion

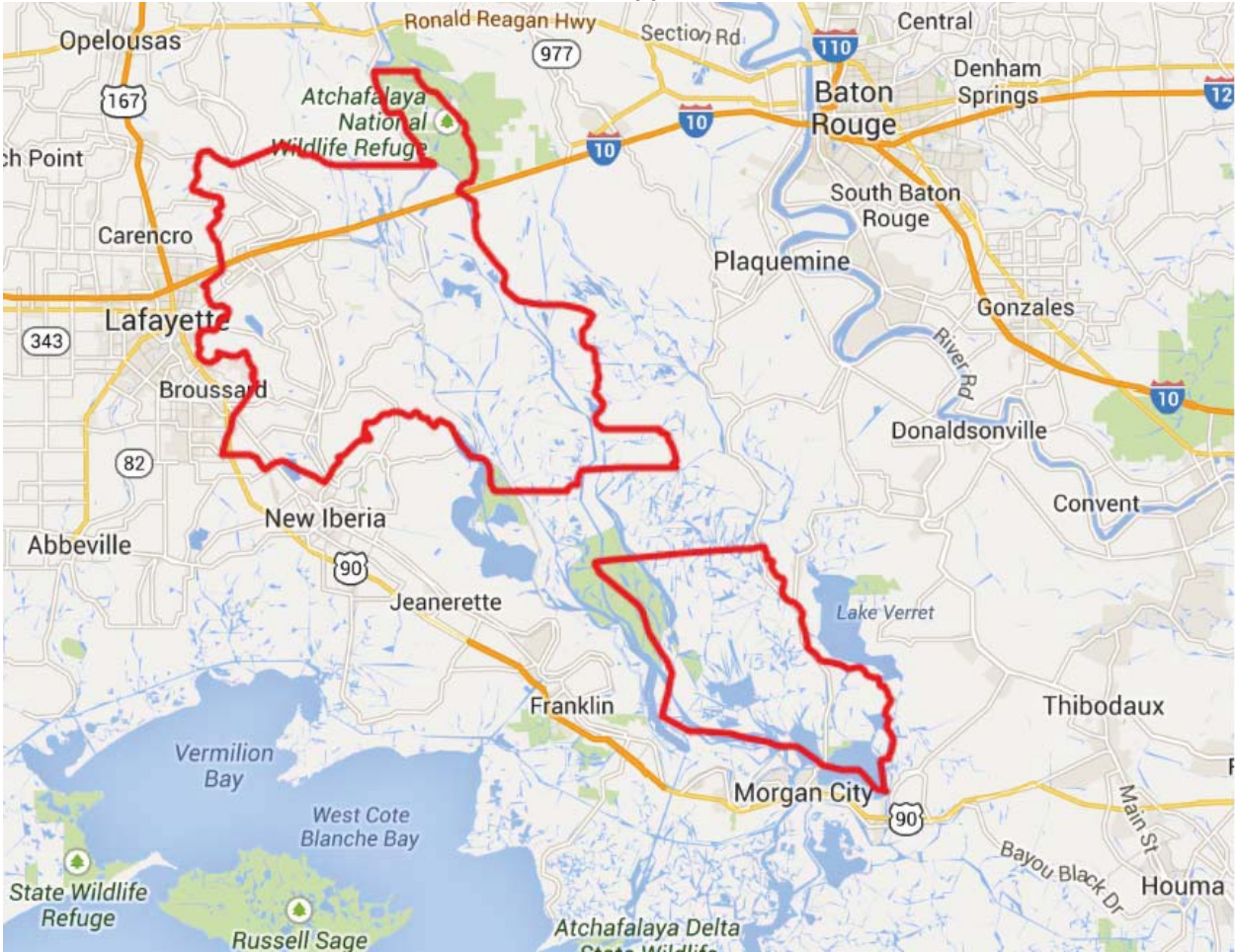
On behalf of The Bayou Telephone Company I would like to thank the FCC for giving us the opportunity to submit this experiment request. There are approximately 1500 underserved or unserved residences in our Service Area plus the expanded territory. These funds will allow the families to connect to the world. We are looking forward to submitting the actual proposal when directed to do so. Our goal is to serve the underserved and unserved in Lower St. Martin Parish, Louisiana.

Sincerely,

/s/ Edward Meyer

Edward Meyer
President
The Bayou Telephone Company

St. Martin Parish (Upper and Lower)



Bayou Special Services Area, Plus Expanded Service Area - Lower St. Martin Parish

